

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE

REPORT

& Section 2

S. N. D. 246

Date July 23, 1931

Subject (in full) Re attached report by the Shanghai Times on the John Thorburn case.

Made by D. S. Golder.

Forwarded by

W.B. Kim S.I.

In the July 23rd issue of the above newspaper, a report appears which sets forth in detail the arrest of John Thorburn as witnessed by a Catholic priest residing at Henli.

Mr. W. J. Mills of the H.B.M. Consulate was interviewed regarding the veracity of the report, he stated that no such report had been made to the Consulate, but that the British Authorities were investigating the matter. Mr. Mills expressed doubt as to the report in view of the fact that 7 weeks have elapsed since the reported occurrence took place.

Emfold
D. S.

Officer i/c Special Branch.

S2, Further report later please.

W.B. Kim
24:7:31.

S2, Please prepare a summary in the form of a diary of the action taken by the Municipal Police in connection with the efforts to find Thorburn. The diary should in addition give an outline of the history of the case, and important happenings connected with it known to the Police.

Memorandum.POLICE FORCE,
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL,

Shanghai,

23:7:1931.

To

S2,

Please ascertain if the British Consulate has obtained this information, and if the newspaper report regarding the statement of the R. C. priest is substantially correct.

W. G.

THE HONG KONG

Catholics

THE COMMUNIST

土 籍 泰

Additional Evidence Is Found Thorburn Was Arrested By Gendarmerie

PRIEST TELLS OF VISIT FROM BRITISH YOUTH DURING NIGHT OF JUNE 1 AND SUBSEQUENT ARREST BY SOLDIERS

STRUGGLES WITH CAPTORS AND RECEIVES BAYONET WOUND IN NECK

Appeal Of Local British Residents Received In London; Reply Comes Back Stating Action Will Be Taken; Chinese Comment

"The Shanghai Times" is endeavoring to give additional indisputable evidence of the arrest of Thorburn, 18-year-old British resident of Shanghai, who has been missing for over seven weeks, was actually arrested in the vicinity of Quinsan by Chinese military police. The evidence has been furnished by a Catholic priest who actually sheltered Thorburn on the night of June 1 and, later, saw him seized by Chinese police and taken off to Quinsan. The evidence also shows that Thorburn broke away from his captors and dashed down the railway line where he was intercepted and again arrested after a struggle, during which he was wounded in the neck by a bayonet carried by one of the soldiers. What happened to Thorburn after his second arrest is a mystery which the entire foreign community of Shanghai is anxious to solve, with or without the aid of the Chinese authorities.

This further proof of Thorburn's arrest has come from a reliable source. The report gives details of the arrest as actually witnessed by our informant, a Catholic priest, who has since been unable to ascertain what happened to Thorburn after he was taken away by the Chinese police in the direction of the Quinsan railway station.

Arrived at Quinsan, Thorburn left Shanghai, presumably by train, for Quinsan and back on the morning of June 1. He was seen at Quinsan and later in Quinsan at about 10 o'clock on the night of June 1. He was seen at the home of the Catholic priest, where they were staying, and at the home of a friend, a member of the Quinsan community, called at the home of the priest in the neighborhood of Quinsan and back. The priest knew Thorburn well by sight and had conversed with him on numerous occasions. On the night of June 1, shortly after 10 o'clock, Thorburn knocked at the door of the priest's home and was admitted. He was in a distressed condition and was very nervous. He explained his situation by mentioning something about falling into a canal. His questions were asked and Thorburn's clothes were removed and dried. He was provided with dry garments while this was being done.

Arrest And Escape
Next morning Thorburn took his leave of the priest and was only a few yards away when some Chinese soldiers seized him and shot in Chinese. "There's that Englishman". They immediately seized him and led him off in the direction of Quinsan. He was locked up temporarily in a small house, but somehow managed to break out, and fled once again in the direction of the priest's home. He was seen by the priest along the railway line. Thorburn struggled violently, but was finally overpowered, receiving a bayonet wound in the neck during the struggle. Just how serious the wound was the priest was unable to say, as Thorburn was hurried off in the direction of the Quinsan railway station. That was the last seen of Thorburn by the priest.

Other Testimony

Other witnesses examined by Mr. A. L. Scott, British Vice-Consul, have stated that Thorburn had his arms tied behind his back and was taken by train from Quinsan to Soochow. Witnesses also stated that Thorburn was seen in Soochow, wounded and, an unconfirmed report states, mutilated.

In the light of this fresh evidence it appears beyond question that Thorburn was arrested by the Chinese military at Quinsan and was actually taken to the Quinsan railway station where he was entrained for Soochow.

Another Protest

In the meantime indignation in Shanghai is growing daily. The cabled protest signed by over 2,300 British residents has reached London where Mr. F. H. Crossley, formerly of Shanghai, who has cabled receipt of the protest, will see that it reaches the right quarters.

Still another national society has interested itself in the disappearance of Thorburn. Yesterday the Shanghai branch of the Anzac Society, consisting of local Australians and New Zealanders, forwarded the following telegraphic protest to the British Prime Minister:

Shanghai Anzac Society consisting of Anzacs who fought in Great War and Australians New Zealanders resident China record strongest indignation disappearance John Thorburn (son) Despite conclusive evidence of arrest obtained by British Authorities Chinese Government deny all knowledge of